

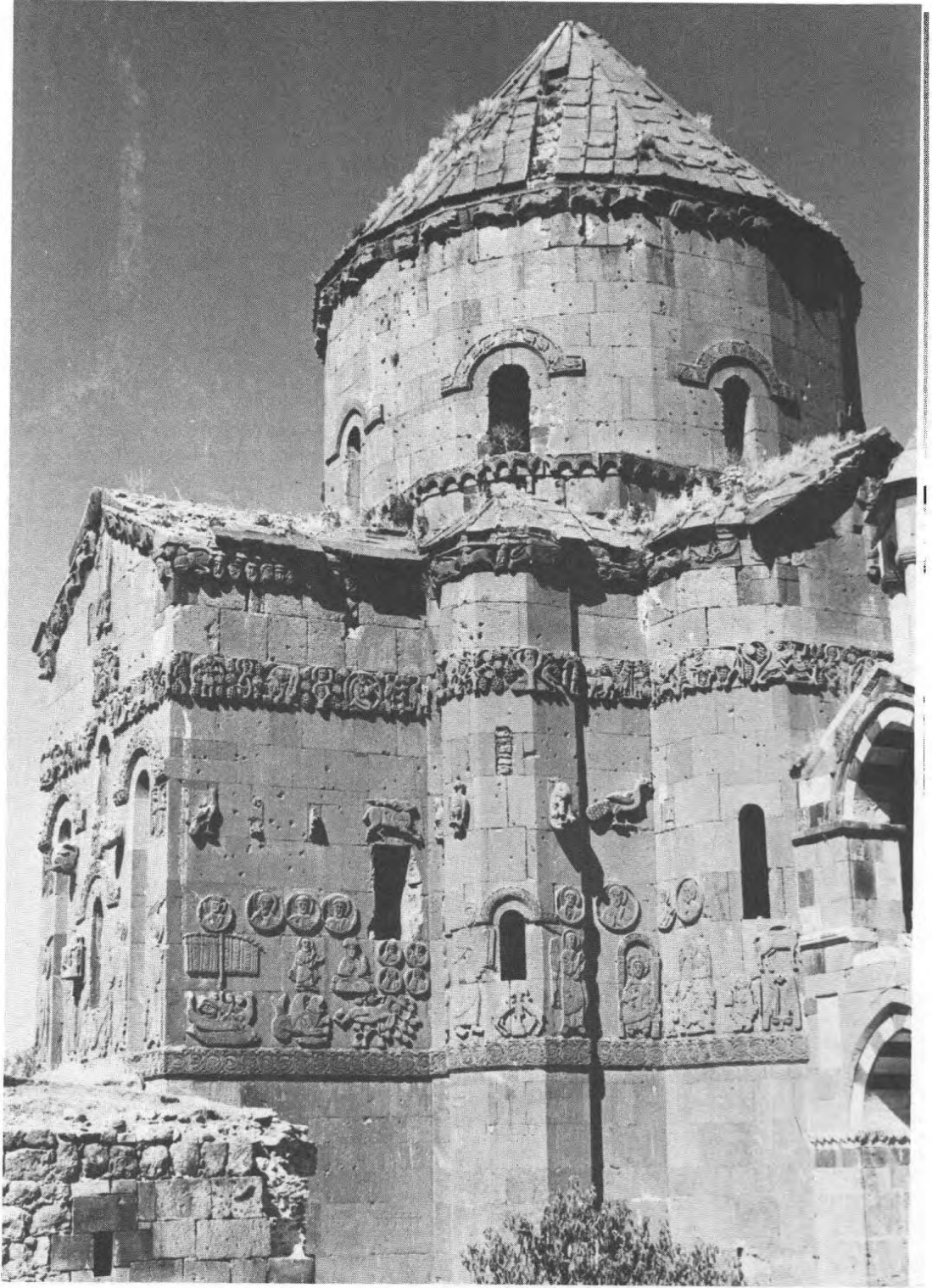
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

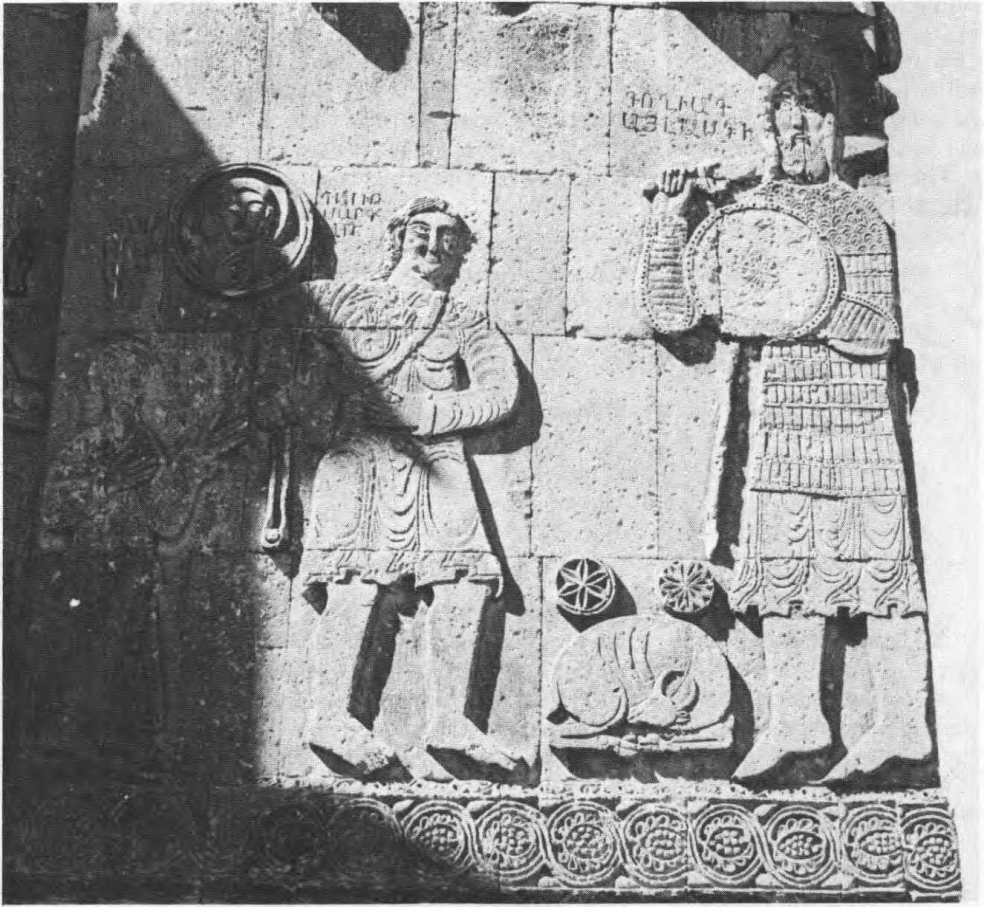
The articles in this volume, as in all others in the Collected Studies Series, have not been given a new, continuous pagination. In order to avoid confusion, and to facilitate their use where these same studies have been referred to elsewhere, the original pagination has been maintained wherever possible.

Each article has been given a Roman number in order of appearance, as listed in the Contents. This number is repeated on each page and quoted in the index entries.



(a)

ACHTHAMAR AND DIGENIS AKRITES



(b)

The Church of the Holy Cross (PLATE XL (a)) on the island of Achthamar in Lake Van was built by King Gagik of Vaspourakan between 915 and 921 and survives as perhaps the most remarkable of all Armenian monuments. Its peculiar interest lies in the bold frieze which encircles the walls (PLATE XL b, c) and in its iconography. This has been described by a number of scholars.¹ Professor Der Nersessian derives the iconography from late 4th century or early 5th century cycles in Egypt; as a whole it is not met with elsewhere in Asia Minor, Syria, or Mesopotamia.

¹ Particularly by Arménag Sakisian in 'Art Bulletin', xxv (1943), 346, and Professor Sirarpie Der Nersessian in her *Armenia and the Byzantine Empire*, Cambridge, Mass., 1945.

The Byzantine epic of Digenis Akrites has been dated by Professor John Mavrogordato between 1042 and 1054; other commentators place it rather earlier. The legendary exploits of Digenis took place largely in Armenia at a time when Armenian culture was particularly alive. Two schools of scholars have examined its historical background: broadly speaking Sathas, Legrand and Polites have sought to find Byzantine sources for it, whilst Grégoire has concentrated on Arab origins. Only Adontz has gone into the obvious Armenian connections.² He rather overstates his case by discovering that nearly all those mentioned in the poem are Armenian. He did not, however, note the parallels in the description of Digenis Akrites' palace and its decoration, on the Upper Euphrates, in Book 7 of the epic with the description of Gagik's palace (now destroyed) described by a contemporary Armenian historian,³ and the decoration surviving in the Church. These parallels would not be so striking if the iconography of the church had not been so unusual.

Thoma Ardzruni describes the vineyards and gardens which surrounded Gagik's palace. The king built

'un palais carré, de 40 coudées en largeur, d'autant en longueur et en hauteur. La muraille épaisse de trois grands pas . . . L'édifice s'élève de plein-vol, sans colonnes de support . . . Il s'y trouve des enforcements voûtés, des angles, des corridors délicieux, inimaginables, dont l'oeuil ne se rend pas compte; des coupoles, solides comme le ciel, ornées et scintillantes d'or.'

The golden-decorated palace of Digenis Akrites was set in the same luxurious gardens⁴:

'Of goodly size, four-square of ashlar'd stone. . .
Within he made three-vaulted upper chambers,
Of goodly height, the vaults all variegated,
And chambers cruciform, and strange pavilions,
With shining marbles throwing gleams of light.'

Both descriptions are somewhat lyrically vague and describe the ideal of a Byzantine, or at any rate oriental, palace, perhaps something like that of Basil 1st at Constantinople. But in the decoration of the Achthamar church and Digenis' palace there are some more definite links. The palace has a bizarre mixture of Old Testament and classical scenes: Agamemnon and Alexander jostle with Samson and Saul. Achthamar has an almost entirely Old Testament cycle with friezes of hunting scenes and wild animals such as Digenis hunted. Not surprising is the appearance of Saint Theodore at Achthamar and as the patron of Digenis' palace chapel. In both is the unusual scene of Samson fighting the lion. Another rare duplication is:

'Moses his miracles, the plagues of Egypt,
Exodus of the Jews, ungrateful murmurs,
And God's vexation, and His servant's prayers.'⁵

'His servant's prayers', may be a reference to one of the distinctive features with which Professor Der Nersessian relates the Achthamar sculpture to the *Commendatio Animae*

² N. Adontz: 'Les fonds historiques de l'épopée byzantine Digénès Akritas', in *Byz. Zeitschrift* xxix (1930), 198-227.

³ Thoma Ardzruni (in Brosset: *Coll. des Historiens Arméniens*, vol. i, St Petersburg, 1874, Book III, Ch. 36—Brosset's translation.

⁴ John Mavrogordato: *Digenes Akrites*, Oxford, 1956, pp. 217-23. His translation of ll. 3352 and 3357-60, using the Grottaferrata MS. Many of these lines are closely imitated in a later poem from Melitene (Malatya) on the Upper Euphrates, some 250 miles west of Van.

⁵ Mavrogordato: ll. 3403-5.

scenes in very early Christian sarcophagus decoration.⁶ The souls of the deceased of this Armenian dynasty are commended to God who is asked to deliver them as He had delivered Moses from Pharaoh or David from Saul and Goliath. Thus we find not only David and Goliath, rare in Byzantine, and unique in surviving Armenian iconography on this scale, but Saul in the same scene in both Digenis and Achthamar. (PLATE XL (b)).

‘ David midmost he showed, without all arms,
Sling only bearing in his hand and stone;
Beyond Goliath too in stature great,
Dreadful to look at, mighty in his strength,
From head to foot in iron fenced about,
Bearing a javelin like a weaver’s beam
In hue all iron by the painter’s art.
He painted too the very moves of war:
Struck rightly by the stone Goliath straight
Fell wounded to the ground immediately;
How David running, lifted up his sword,
Cutting his head off had the victory.
And then the fear of Saul, the meek one’s flight,
The thousand plots, and God His vengeance.’⁷

One cannot help thinking that the author of Digenis is describing the scene at Achthamar.

In view of the geographical and chronological proximity of both the composition of Digenis Akrites and the building of the church and palace on Achthamar, and because some of the iconography of the one, unique in Armenia, occurs in the other also, the possibility of a link between the two must seriously be considered.

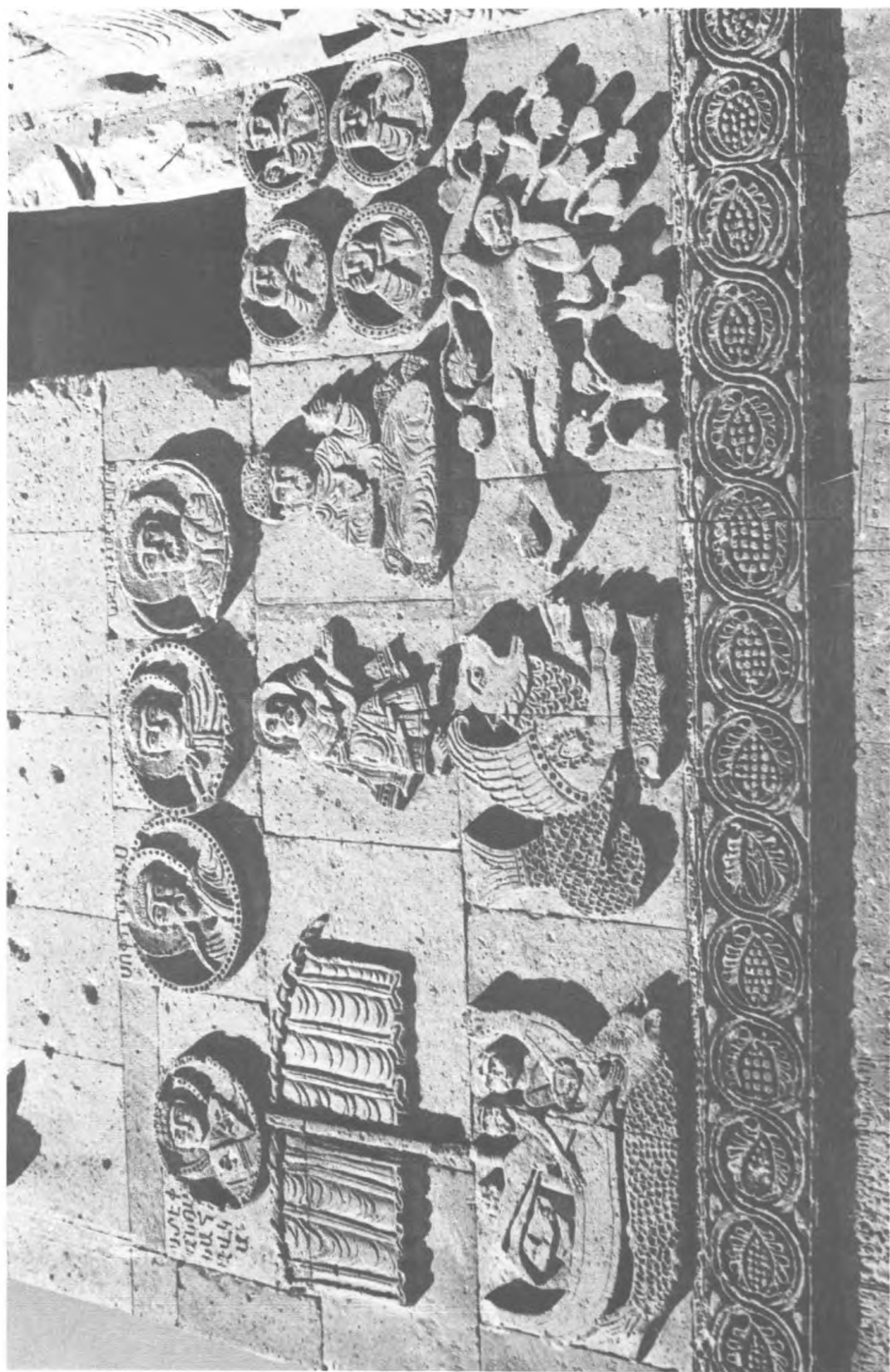
⁶ See also Josef Strzygowski: *Origin of Christian Church Art*, Oxford, 1923, p. 159.

⁷ Mavrogordato: ll. 3379–92.

PLATES:

(NB. The photographs used here differ from those in the original publication.)

- (a) The Church of the Holy Cross from the S.W.
- (b) Frieze on S. side of E. apse. David fights Goliath, separated by a ram. Samuel, in the medallion, intercedes to save David from Saul.
- (c) Frieze on S. side of W. apse. The story of Jonah. To the left Jonah is swallowed by the whale (which becomes a hippocamp in the centre). Above is Jonah and the King of Nineveh, and to the right Jonah sleeping under the gourd tree.



II

Han Turali rides again

Digenes Akrites was 'discovered' in May 1868 when a monk of Soumela lent a manuscript of the poem to Sabbas Ioannides, who sent it on to Paris where C. Sathas and E. Legrand published it in 1875. Ioannides himself re-edited this version in Constantinople in 1887. *David of Sassoun* was 'discovered' in 1873 when Karekin Servantstian (1840-92) took the story cycle down from the lips of one Gurbo on the plain of Muş and published it in Constantinople in 1874.¹ Thus the two great medieval Christian

1. This Note has a vast and quite turbulent bibliographical background, which would dwarf the text to little purpose, so I am limiting references to items which are relevant to its point (apart from a funerary excursus in n.6). I am grateful to David Ricks, Bruce Lippard and Michael Ursinus for advice.

For literature on *Digenes*, start with H. -G. Beck, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Volksliteratur* (Munich 1971) 48-63. I fancy that the 'discovery' of the poem in 1868 may have been the result of a rearrangement of the Soumela MSS inevitable on the building of a new library for them after 1864: see A. Bryer and D. Winfield, 'Nineteenth-century monuments in the city and vilayet of Trebizond: architectural and historical notes: part 3', *Ἀρχαῖον Πόντου* 30 (1970) 276. After 1887 Ioannides deposited the MS in the library of the Constantinople Ἑλληνικὸς Φιλολογικὸς Σύλλογος; the frequent assertion that it is now 'lost' seems to be derived from an opinion expressed by S. Kyriakides in 1936: J. Mavrogordato, *Digenes Akrites* (Oxford 1956) xi. In fact, after 1923 most of the Soumela library was transferred (eventually) to the library of the Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara, including other Pontic MSS such as a cartulary of Vazelon monastery, which the TTK preserves. I see no reason why the *Digenes* MS should be lost: has anyone tried asking for it at the TTK library recently?

For English readers, *David* is most accessible through two complementary translations: by A.K. Shalian, *David of Sassoun: The Armenian Folk Epic in four cycles* (Athens, Ohio 1964), which is based on an 'official' composite text published in Erevan in 1939; and by an Armenian native of Trebizond, L. Surmelian, *Daredevils of Sassoun* (Denver 1964), based on a single text.

'epics' of the Anatolian borders, Greek and Armenian, the geographical and historical backgrounds of which at least overlap, were 'discovered' and published almost simultaneously. There is a more tantalising coincidence. Ioannides was διδάσκαλος and first serious Greek historian of Trebizond when Servantstian was Gregorian Armenian bishop of that city. Yet I do not think that either refers to the other. Such was the mutual exclusiveness of even the Christian communities which co-existed cheek-by-jowl in a place like Ottoman Trabzon that it seems quite possible that the Greek didact and Armenian prelate never met, let alone discussed their great and comparable findings. It is more surprising that, with notable exceptions, this mutual exclusiveness lingers a century later among students, not only of *Digenes* and *David*, but of other Arabic and Turkish ballad cycles, heroic poetry, epics and romances of Asia Minor.

It is true that approaches to the genesis and transmission from memory to writing of such material has been greatly refined — for example, in the case of *Digenes*, by Roddy Beaton in this journal.² (We are now faced with problems of transmission from writing to memory, for *Dede Korkut* has been reduced to a Turkish school textbook; in the same way it was publication of his deeds which finally killed the Serbian Prince Marko Kraljević where the Turks had failed in 1395). Many of the Anatolian stories reveal more than one layer of 'historical' context in which later names may be attached to earlier tales before they were edited in the middle ages, recorded from the last century, or both. The whole corpus is heterogeneous in genre, but shares in common the interactions of the Christian and Muslim peoples of Anatolia as its matter.

Examination of interconnections within the corpus as a whole has been hesitant — if only because it would take a polymath such as Henri Grégoire to master it all. But sightings of the will-o'-the-wisp of topicality and 'historicity' were at first bolder, when Grégoire himself was not the only one to burn his fingers in that

2. 'Was *Digenes Akrites* an oral poem?', *BMGS* 7 (1981) 7-28; but see now S. Alexiou, βασιλειος Διγενής Ἀκρίτης (Athens 1985). If Byzantinists wish to test the versions of *Digenes* against a more-or-less genuine oral poem, they should read a single version of *David of Sassoun*.

ignis fatuus.³ It is out of fashion. For example one can learn rather more about medieval Georgian feudal institutions from the works of Wakhtang VI (d.1737, a sort of latter-day Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus), than from the romance of Shota Rustaveli (supposedly b.1166, whose *Knight in a Panther's Skin* passed, like the Cretan *Erotokritos*, from writing to memory). But on the whole the Muslim material, from *Seyyid Battal* through the *Melikdanişmendnâme* to the *gesta* of Umur Paşa (which pretends to be 'history' anyway) is more susceptible to pegging to 'actual' events than the Christian.⁴ Yet who can deny that, in the same way that there is something called 'Homeric archaeology', such texts as Servantstian's *David* and even the Escorial version of *Digenes* offer through the distorting lenses of their genesis and transmission a glimpse of a frontier ethos and its *realia* which is at least more vivid, and archaeologically recognisable, than any Escorial *Taktikon*?⁵ The question is

3. E.g. in papers in H. Grégoire, *Autour de l'épopée byzantine* (London 1975). There are further hazards. I do not know whether to be gratified or alarmed at the way my first undergraduate (but still wary) foray into this field has been taken up: 'Akhtamar and Digenis Akritas', *Antiquity* 34 (1960) 295-97; H.M. Bartikian, 'Notes sur l'épopée byzantine "Digénis Akritas"', *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 3 (1966) 166; and G. Huxley, 'Antecedents and context of Digenes Akrites', *GRBS* 15 (1974) 332-33.

4. On Wakhtang VI see D.M. Lang, *The last years of the Georgian monarchy, 1658-1832* (New York 1957) 32-48, 118. The latest English version of Shota Rustaveli is Katharine Vivian, *The Knight in Panther Skin* (London 1977); and French S. Tsouladzé, *Le Chevalier à la Peau de Tigre* (Paris 1964). Whatever its date of composition or even authorship, which are now, not before time, in question, the romance is of such a literary nature that social conclusions drawn from it must be treated with the reserve one would put on the *Erotokritos* as a 'source' for Venetocratic feudalism: an example is Nino Salia, 'Le poème médiéval Géorgien', *Bedi Kartlisa* 19-20 (1965) 15-30. On Seyyid Battal, see S.P. Kyriakidès, 'Eléments historiques byzantins dans le roman épique turc de Sayyid Battâl, martyr musulman du VIII^e siècle, est-il devenu, dans le légende, le contemporain d'Amer (+ 863)?', *B 11* (1936) 563-70, 571-75; and (for a local interpretation) M. Aslanbay, *Seyyid Battal Gazi'nin, hayati ve bazı menkıbeleri* (Eskişehir 1953). Admirably, Irène Mélikoff (-Sayar) has edited, translated and commented upon both *La geste de Melik Dânişmend* (Paris 1960); and *Le destân d'Umûr pacha* (Paris 1954).

5. The question is faced squarely and sensibly by N. Oikonomidès, himself 'discoverer' of the Escorial *Taktikon*. Compare his *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX^e et X^e siècles* (Paris 1972); and 'L' "épopée" de Digénis et la frontière orientale de Byzance aux X^e et XI^e siècles', *Travaux et Mémoires* 7 (1979) 375-97. For ethos, cf. J.F. Haldon — H. Kennedy, 'The Arab-Byzantine frontier in the eighth and ninth centuries: military organisation and society in the borderlands', *ZRV* 19 (1980) 79-116.

where to draw the line, which Grégoire so gamely overstepped, in seeking 'historicity'.

It is hardly a new problem and is exacerbated from the start by the random way in which history sticks to places. For example, when the Hospitallers began building their castle at Bodrum in 1407, local Greeks and Turks apparently had no name or legend to account for their colossal quarry: unknown to them it happened to be the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, which was still being listed as a Wonder of the World.⁶ But less than five years

6. A. Luttrell, 'The later history of the Mausolleion and its utilization in the Hospitaller castle at Bodrum', in *The Maussolleion at Halikarnassos*, ed. K. Jeppesen, II (Aarhus, 1986) (= Jutland Archaeological Society Publications, XV:2), 133-35. His Pl.III, of MS Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem, 14, f.312v, dateable 1066-81, shows the Mausoleum in the form of a ciborium baldachin (four free-standing columns on a square marble enclosure carry a dome). This Byzantine type of tomb was evidently shared by that of Patriarch St. Athanasios I of Constantinople (d. before 1323): Alice-Mary M. Talbot, *Faith healing in late Byzantium* (Brookline, Mass. 1983) 14, 56-57, 126-27. Another example of this type, the tomb of the Grand Komnenos IV (d. 1429 and incidentally father-in-law of *han* Turali's great-grandson) survived until 1917 and is illustrated in my 'The faithless Kabazitai and Scholarioi', in *Maistor. Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for Robert Browning*, ed. Ann Moffatt (Canberra 1984) pl.3. The last built of the type known to me are the canopied tombs of King Solomon II Bagration of Imereti (d. 1815) — see *Bedi Kartlisa* 25 (1968) 214-17 — and of Metropolitan Konstantios of Trebizond, who was buried sitting down in his surviving tomb in 1879: see *Ἀρχαῖον Πόντου* 29 (1968) 103-5. The practice of enthroning dead kings and prelates may have given rise to this sort of tomb and persisted until this century: see the photograph of the funeral procession of Patriarch Ioakeim III (d. 1912) in H.G. Dwight, *Constantinople. Settings and Traits* (New York and London 1926) 507.

A.L. Jakobson reports another type of tomb from the Crimea, of stone-cut models of triple-apsed domed churches, or simply of their open apses in a sort of shrine, which may have Armenian and Georgian parallels, and for which late Byzantine antecedents have been proposed: see A.L. Jakobson, 'Model hrama iz raskopok Eskikermen v Krimu i problema novogo arhitekturnogo stilya v Vizantii', *Zograf* 8 (1977) 30-33; A. Grabar, 'Observations sur l'Arc de Triomphe de la Croix dit Arc d'Eginhard et sur d'autres bases de la Croix', *Cahiers Archéologiques* 27 (1978) 77-83 (for which references I am grateful to Dr. Zaga Gavrilović); and A.L. Jakobson, 'A propos des relations entre les régions littorales au Nord et au Sud de la Mer Noire', *BS* 42 (1981) 43-51 and figs. 1-5b. However, all examples Jakobson has so far published look to me to belong to a common nineteenth-century (and I think no earlier) Pontic type, with which some have declared epigraphic links. A similar one was labelled Byzantine in the Council of Europe exhibition in St. Eirene, Istanbul, in 1985. Comparable examples in their homeland are illustrated in S. Ballance, A. Bryer and D. Winfield, 'Nineteenth-century monuments in the city and vilayet of Trebizond: architectural and historical notes: Part 1', *Ἀρχαῖον Πόντου* 28 (1966) 264, pl.34. Nevertheless it is clear that late Byzantine mausolea and funerary practice await their student.

before a German mercenary prisoner of Timur's war identified Çaleoğlu Kale (a minor if older Anatolian monument) on the spot as the distant Templar 'Castle of the Sparrowhawk' of fourteenth-century Provençal *fée* romance. Who knows? Schiltberger said he heard (but may even have inspired) a local Greek legend about the castle, which was held by a beautiful but bewitched maiden who, like all good Pontic princesses, lured suitors to their fate; Sabbas Ioannides himself recorded the same story there five centuries later.⁷ Here the snake of myth had by 1402 already bitten its own tail to give subsequent twists to the tale. But there are too many distressed damsels and black brides in Anatolian castles as it is, and no version of the legends in which Çaleoğlu Kale is enswathed contributes anything to its archaeology, any more than one can reconstruct, say, a revolutionary Paulician manifesto from *Digenes*, or date the life of its hero (as Ioannides did) to precisely 936-69. Yet we must push on — warily.

First: it seems to me that the most useful way to revive the problem of 'historicity' is to stand it on its head and ask why apparently 'historical' events stuck in the memory *before* trying to peg them to 'actual' happenings. *Second*: we ought to keep in mind, now that it is more widely accessible, the whole corpus of material, in a debate which Sabbas Ioannides and Karekin Servantstian failed to start in Trebizond in 1868-74.

These are large injunctions and this is a modest Note. But it may illustrate the problem anew by pulling together, and adding material to, a famous event: the first 'marriage' between a Byzantine δέσποινα and a Türkmen (as opposed to a common, or garden, Turk) *han*, which was probably consummated somewhere between Trebizond and Sinir in August 1352. The 'actual' event is recorded in Trapezuntine chronicle, to which can be added a

A final and understandable misconception is that the sculpted rams found outside such Armenian churches as the Twelve Apostles at Kars, or at Varzahan (midway between Sinir and Bayburt) are Akkoyunlu monuments: in fact all appear to be Armenian tombs. (The frontispiece of R. Curzon, *Armenia* [London 1854] may be identified as of the now lost example at Varzahan; the original drawing is now in the collection of Francis Witts Esq., of Upper Slaughter).

7. For the large bibliography of this small site, see A. Bryer and D. Winfield, *The Byzantine monuments and topography of the Pontos* (Washington D.C. 1985) I, 103-6; II, pl.29.

reference in the *han*'s biography. A similar event is reflected in an Oğuz ballad cycle, to which I offer what may be an echo in an Armenian folk tale. Some, but not all, of this Greek, Persian, Turkish and Armenian material and background has been discussed widely in print already, which will therefore be summarised only for new readers who start here.

The Four 'Sources'

I. The twelve or thirteen Turkish ballads, legends or stories, associated with *Dede Korkut* were probably edited, perhaps around Tabriz, perhaps around Erzurum, perhaps in the fifteenth century. The two sixteenth-century MSS, in Dresden and the Vatican respectively, have only aroused serious study in this century, particularly after the publication of the Vatican MS in 1952.⁸ The immediate context is Türkmen life in Anatolia in the fourteenth century, but there is a substratum reaching back to a time before Dede Korkut's Oğuz heroes crossed west over the wandering Oxus. On the whole, ballads based on a perhaps eleventh-century past, and those (like Ballad 6) concerned with fourteenth-century encounters with Anatolian Christians, seem to be discrete.

Ballad 6 is well known. *Han* Turali, son of Hanlı *hoca*, our Akkoyunlu (White Sheep) hero, seeks a bride. Only the *tekmur* of Trabzon has a paragon princess: her name is Salcan *hatun* and she can draw two bows at once. Turali rejects the warnings of his father against venturing down from the windy *yayla*, where Türkmen graze their flocks freely, to the forested castle-lands of the Euxine coast, where infidels farm. *Han* Turali rides into the *meydan* of Trabzon to claim his bride. But first the *tekmur* sets him three tasks: to down a royal lion, a black bull and a raging camel-stallion, three monsters who have already accounted for thirty-two previous suitors; their heads hang around the square where Turali warms up in front of the *tekmur* on his throne and

8. F. İz, s.v. 'Dede Korkut' in *EF*² has a bibliography up to 1958, to which may be added (besides items mentioned below): O.Ş. Gökyay, *Buğünkü dille Dede Korkut massallari* (Istanbul 1943); K.M. Fahrettin, *Dede Korkut, Oğuznâmelevi* (Istanbul 1952); V.M. Zhirmunskiy and A.N. Kononov, *Kniga Moego Deda Korkuta* (Moscow and Leningrad 1962); and H. Korogly, *Oguskiy geroicheskiy epos* (Moscow 1976).

the princess in her palace. Our hero is stripped mother-naked; he even unveils himself. At this point the *hatun* 'went weak at the knees, her cat miaowed, she slavered like a sick calf. To the maidens by her said she said: "If only God Most High would put mercy into my father's heart, if only he would fix a bride-price and give me to this man! Alas that such a man should perish at the hands of a monster!" '.

Turali disemboweled the bull; there were alarming scenes in the *meydan* when 'The lion roared and every single horse in the square pissed blood'; and the Trapezuntines tried to nobble the camel. Turali won his princess. Folding his tent, they rode off for seven days to the pastures of the Oğuz. But the *tektur* of Trabzon repented his loss and sent six hundred of his warriors to reclaim his daughter. She, but not Turali, was ready for him: the *hatun* cut up and routed her father's own army. His manhood thus slighted, Turali could only challenge his bride to single combat. She shot a headless arrow "that sent the lice in his hair scuttling down to his feet." They were reconciled, married by Hanlı *hoca* (who was also reconciled), and lived happily ever after.⁹

II. The Armenian folk tale of *The Fox, the Wolf, the Bear and the Emerald-Bird* was taken down for the first time by T. Nawasardeanc^c in Vağaršapat (Etchmiadzin), probably between 1876 and 1882.¹⁰ There are two themes, perhaps two separate stories. The first relates how an Armenian prince left his father and, during a famine, befriended in turn the creatures of the title. At the end of the famine, the Fox said: 'This man has kept us all these years. Let's do him a good turn . . . He is still single. So let's go find him a wife. I have heard the *tagavor* of Trapizon

9. Cf. G. Lewis, *The Book of Dede Korkut* (London 1974) 119; and F. Sümer, A.E. Uysal and W.S. Walker; *The Book of Dede Korkut. A Turkish epic* (Austin, Texas and London 1972) 101. I summarise because I have gone over this before in 'Greeks and Türkmens: the Pontic exception', *DOP* 29 (1975) = *The Empire of Trebizond and the Pontos* (London 1980) V, 119, 134-35 (where the question of dowry/bride-price is also raised).

10. I am most grateful to Professor Charles Dowsett of Oxford for tracking down the published origins of the story translated by L. Surmelian, *Apples of Immortality* (London 1968) 221-24 as T. Nawasardeanc^c, *Hay žoğovrdakan hek'iaf'ner* (Vağaršapat 1882) II, 29-37, reprinted in H. Orbeli, same title (Erevan 1959) II, 254-59.

has a very lovely daughter, a praiseworthy maiden in every way.' The others cried: 'Yes, let's go to Trapizon!'

In Trapizon the king's ploughman was enjoying his siesta. The Fox yoked the Bear and the Wolf to his plough. The *tagavor* and his daughter came out on the palace balcony to see what was going on, when the Emerald-Bird snatched the bride. It flew her back to the Armenian prince. The king sent his army to retrieve the princess. The four creatures routed it and the *tagavor* of Trapizon relented. The Armenian prince was reconciled with his father: he and his Greek bride lived happily ever after.

III. Michael Panaretos (d. after 1390), the laconic Greek court chronicler of Trebizond, reports that on 29 June 1348 a Türkmen coalition, including Μαχμάτ Εἰκεπτάρης (Mehmed the *Rikabdar*, 'stirrup-holder') of Bayburt and Τουραλίπεκ (Turali *beg*) of the Ἀμιτιῶται (Akkoyunlu) attacked Trebizond, fought for three days, and fled injured and crestfallen, losing many Turks on the way. Next year the Grand Komnenos Alexios III (1349-90) succeeded to the throne. In 1352: 'the Emperor's sister, lady Maria the Grand Komnene, went away to marry Χουτλουπέκης [Fahreddin Kutlu *beg*], son of Τουραλῆ [Turali] who was *emir* of the Ἀμιτιῶται [Akkoyunlu], in August.' They appear to have lived happily ever after. Maria revisited Trebizond in August 1358 as δεσποινάχατ (*despoina hatun*); Alexios III built the massive Κούκος castle (Koğ Kale) on his Akkoyunlu borders in 1360 and was prepared to help Kutlu *beg* during the summer grazing of 1363, but joint Greco-Türkmen exercises were called off because of the bubonic plague. But the *emir* paid a state visit to the Trapezuntine diplomatic hospitality compound above the city in July 1365, and the emperor returned the visit in 1367.¹¹

IV. Abū Bakr-i Tihranī wrote his account of Kutlu *beg* in Persian in about 1478, the year of the death of his patron, Uzun Hasan. Uzun Hasan, the greatest of the Akkoyunlu emirs, was great-great-grandson of Turali and husband of the Grand Komnene Theodora the *despoina hatun*, who was great-great-

11. Michael Panaretos, 'Περὶ τῶν Μεγάλων Κομνηνῶν', ed. O. Lampsides, *Ἀρχαῖον Πόντου* 22 (1958) 70-76.

granddaughter of the emperor Alexios III and was buried in Diyarbekir, where Abū Bakr wrote his account. His information on early Akkoyunlu leaders appears to be derived from oral tradition (in which case he had access to both sides of the story), but it has been suggested that his biography of Turali's son Kutlu *beg* may contain material from the life of Turali himself.¹² At any rate Abū Bakr's official revision of events has Kutlu capture *Tisbina* (δέσποινα), daughter of the *tekfur* of Trabzon, as his bride. Later sources endow Kutlu with great piety and zeal: he was a very perfect *gazi* against Trapezuntine and Georgian infidels, went on pilgrimage to Mecca 39 times over, and founded the surviving mosque at Sinir, where he was buried in 1389, the year before his Christian brother-in-law died. Sinir (now Sünürü) is Συνοπία, as its name suggests, a border place, only 33km. south-east of Alexios III's new border castle of Koukos.¹³

Discussion

It might be wiser to leave these four 'sources' at that: but let us ride on with Turali — warily. Opinion is so far about evenly divided about linking 'sources' I and III: *Dede Korkut* and Panaretos. Geoffrey Lewis, author of the most felicitous English translation of *Dede Korkut*, puts the strongest and most commonsensical case against seeking topicality and 'historicity' in these quicksands, so I will take it up. For example, he points out that in Ballad 3, Bamsi Beyrek of the Grey Horse cannot have been incarcerated in the 'infidel' (i.e. Christian) castle of Bayburt for sixteen years, because the place in fact fell under Muslim rule from the late eleventh century, just when *Dede Korkut*'s heroes were arriving on the scene. This is literally true. It was the *melik*

12. Abū Bakr-i Tihranī, *Kitab-i Diyārbakriyya*, edd. N. Lugal, F. Sümer, I (Ankara 1962) 12-15 and 90 (a memory that the then *sultan* of Trabzon — perhaps Alexios IV of n.6 above — supplied siege equipment to Kara Osman [1403-35] son-in-law of Alexios III, at Erzincan); J.E. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu. Clan, confederation, empire* (Minneapolis and Chicago 1976) 46-49.

13. On the importance Sinir, see Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, 'Trebizond and the Turks (1352-1402)', *Ἀρχαῖον Πόντου* 35 (1979) 335, 339, 349; and A. Bryer, 'The question of Byzantine mines in the Pontos: Chalybian iron, Chaldian silver, Koloneian alum and the mummy of Cheriana', *Anatolian Studies* 32 (1982) 136, 144-45: it may have been Alexios's silver rather than his mummy that Turali was after. Woods, 48, 239; Bryer and Winfield, *Pontos*, II, x-xi, 308-10; II, pls. 249-51.

Muğith al-Din Tuğrişah. (d. 1225), son of the Seljuk Kiliç Arslan II, who largely built the awesome walls of Bayburt in 1213 and we have seen that Panaretos records that Turali was himself allied against Christian Trebizond with a Muslim ruler of Bayburt in 1348. But Ballad 3 may well be right in reflecting a higher truth of popular belief that Bayburt was then still 'infidel'. The *melik*, who had the misfortune of being prisoner and sort of vassal of first a Cilician Armenian king and then a Trapezuntine emperor, and whose son was baptised to marry a Georgian queen, evidently allowed (or even sponsored) the building of a surviving Orthodox church within his new citadel on whose walls he is still proclaimed a *gazi*. Here Armenian colophons attest Christian life (including Gospel repair) in the 1340s; as late as 1530 Ottoman Bayburt was 77% Christian in households. Its last recorded Greek bishop was appointed in 1633, but its Armenian bishopric (for it was largely an Armenian place) flourished until this century.¹⁴ Whatever the period of Ballad 3, Bayburt was irremediably 'infidel' to Türkmens in its surrounding pastures. It is thus unnecessary to argue with Lewis that this section was either composed before the twelfth century, or that 'Bayburt' replaces the name of some earlier city — which is as well, because these Türkmens would have encountered few 'infidel' citadels before they reached Bayburt.

Before tackling the topicality of Ballad 6, its folk motifs must be unravelled and disposed of. This is more than usually tricky in the *Dede Korkut* cycle for, by coincidence or inheritance, they are unusually wide. Some are commonplace: for example Delü Dumrul's struggle with Azrail, Angel of Death, in Ballad 5 follows the lines of Hercules's or Digenis's (in the ballads rather than poem) encounter with Thanatos — more interesting is that the story incorporates that of Admetus and Alcestis. As Grimm himself noted, most striking is Ballad 8, where Basat and Tepegöz reenact the tale of Ulysses and Polyphemus in *Odyssey*, ix, with a Byzantine twist: Tepegöz is the 40-cubit Σαραντάπηχος, a Cyclops who reappears in Armenian folk tales.¹⁵ C.S. Mundy

14. Lewis, 18; Bryer and Winfield, *Pontos*, I, 352-55. Woods, 47, 238 sits on the fence, which Sümer, Uysal and Walker avoid altogether.

15. It was, of course, a Τεσσαρακοντάπηγος who sowed the seeds of Iconoclasm: on such Greek giantry see S. Kyriakides, *Ἑλληνική Λαογραφία* (Athens 1922).

favours an enduring repertoire of Anatolian tales from which both borrowed rather than a direct Homeric link with *Dede Korkut*.¹⁶ Whatever the answer, the appearance of an Amazon in Ballad 6 should hardly surprise in such company — it would be surprising if Amazons did *not* in any encounter between Pontic Greeks and Türkmens. The Amazons whom the Argonauts met there were native, and endemic, to the Pontos.¹⁷ They had already figured (naturally on the Greek side) in the *Melikdanişmendnâme*.¹⁸

The motif of *han* Turali's Herculean labours needs no comment either, nor would that of the pastoralist's romantic and actual addiction to bride-snatching, found in *Digenes* and many other Oriental and Western traditions — were it not for the fact that it is inherently tricky to snatch an Amazon bride.¹⁹ The themes contradict. *David of Sassoun* came across the same problem when he encountered Hantut *hatun* in the Armenian epic:

'Two or three years ago,
They took me to a prince, the son of a king.
They put me in a room,
The prince came in,
We wrestled playfully,
I grabbed his arm, the arm came off . . .
Than I reached for the other arm,
That arm came off, too; his back was broken,
He gasped and died . . .
I made a vow that
I would (only) marry the man who could down me.
Today we fought; you threw me down.
From now on I am your wife, you are my husband,
Take me wherever you wish.'²⁰

16. 'Polyphemus and Tepegöz', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 18 (1956) 279-302.

17. S.A. Nikolaidēs, 'Ἀμαζόνες καὶ Πόντος', *Ἀρχαῖον Πόντου* 26 (1964) 250-56.

18. Irène Mélikoff, 'Les Géorgiens et les Arméniens dans la littérature épique des Turcs d'Anatolie', *Bedi Kartlisa* 11-12 (1961) 27-35; and the same's 'Géorgiens, Turcomans et Trébizonde: Notes sur le "Livre de Dede Korkut"', *Bedi Kartlisa* 17-18 (1964) 18-27.

19. Cf. W.J. Entwistle, 'Bride-snatching and the 'Deeds of Digenis'', *Oxford Slavonic Papers* 4 (1953) 1-17. S. Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (Copenhagen 1955-58), Motifs H310-359 (especially H332.1 and H345), H901.1 and H1161 are most relevant to *Dede Korkut* Ballad 6.

20. Trans. Shalian, 323-24.

Geographically, *Dede Korkut* illustrates the Türkmen trauma of having to descend from the upland *yayla* to make contact with the 'infidels' of the coast more vividly than Panaretos's catalogue of summer skirmishes.²¹ What is interesting here is the placing of the story in a Christian agricultural context in the Armenian 'source' II. If the story in *Dede Korkut* and this tale are related (I venture to each other rather than through a Greek intermediary), this is its most telling alteration. The Armenian animals know how to use a Greek plough, which *han* Turali would not have deigned to touch.

The Armenian tale and *Dede Korkut* share the notion that the ruler of Trebizond tried to regain his princess from the clutches of her suitor, and failed. This is more serious. Even Panaretos supplies evidence that not only emperors, but their subjects, found such diplomatic alliances distasteful. He records that 'some people came almost to rebelling against the Emperor' Alexios III in 1362 when the *çelebi* Taceddin sought a marriage alliance: he had to wait seventeen years for his Greek princess, and then after much parleying.²² Doukas expresses such disgust at the first great Byzantine-Ottoman marriage, between Orhan and Theodora Kantakouzene, in 1346.²³ From the Orthodox point of view it was no marriage at all, while from the Turkish it could be interpreted as a form of vassalage: such hostage wives could not become an *ulu hatun*.

Orhan and Theodora broke the barrier in 1346; in his *Düstur-nâme* of about 1465 Enveri records the earlier courtship of Theodora by Umur, a very gentle *gazi*.²⁴ It made an impression. Trebizond took the plunge six years later when Kutlu *beg* married Maria Komnene: his son, grandson and great-grandson took wives from the same family in their generations. It was a deeper

21. X. de Planhol, 'La signification géographique du livre de Dede Korkut', *Journal Asiatique* 254 (1966) 225-44.

22. Panaretos, ed. Lampsides, 74, 78.

23. Doukas, *Istoria Turco-Bizantina 1341-1462*, ed. V. Grecu (Bucarest 1958) 59; cf. A. Bryer, 'Greek historians on the Turks: the case of the first Byzantine-Ottoman marriage', in *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages. Essays presented to Richard William Southern*, edd. R.H.C. Davis and J.M. Wallace-Hadrill (Oxford 1981) 471-93.

24. *Umûr pacha* (in n.4); P. Lemerle, *L'Emirat d'Aydin, Byzance et l'Occident* (Paris 1957).

plunge, because, whoever the early Ottomans claimed to be, Türkmens like *han* Turali were not a smart match in 1352. Yet the alliance was the first of eleven in which princesses of Trebizond married Muslims, eight of them Türkmens. Who did it impress? I propose that it stuck hard in the Oğuz imagination, and is maybe remembered in Armenian folklore. But perhaps more significant is that the substantial body of Greek Pontic balladry and tales has no obvious recorded memory of it. This suggests that Turks were more pleased than Greeks.

Finally comes the least important question: do all our 'sources' refer to the same event of 1352? Geoffrey Lewis argues against: it was not Turali but his son who actually married the princess of Trebizond and anyway her name was Maria, not Salcan.²⁵ I am not too worried about this. The Akkoyunlu were widely known as Turalids after their heroic ancestor and Abū Bakr, their genealogist of 'source' IV, seems to have confused *han* Turali with his son too.²⁶ I do not know where Salcan got her name from (it does not sound Turkish), but Abū Bakr got it right by calling her *Tisbina* (δέσποινα), just as Panaretos got it right by calling her -χατ (*hatun*). In any case Georgian princesses with Turkish epithets changed their names on marrying into the Trapezuntine imperial family, and presumably the reverse also occurred.

Those seeking *realia* will indeed find that the surviving *meydan* square of Trabzon, which even Panaretos called the μαϊράνιν, was indeed where the emperor and his princesses displayed themselves at Easter πρόκυψις before Türkmens, Armenians and Frankish traders, and that the heads of Turkish (rather than 'infidel') miscreants were brought there.²⁷ Did the emperor ever regret the alliance and rescue his sister? I do not know, but moving south to the borderlands between Alexios III's new castle at Koukos and Kutlu's base at Sinir, Panaretos cannot conceal small and unseasonable Greek raids on Türkmen-controlled Armenian lands which came to grief in the January cold: in 1369 when the Turks broke their treaty and Greeks died in the treacherous cave

25. Lewis, 17-18.

26. Abū Bakr, I, 15; Woods, 46-47, 238-39.

27. Panaretos, ed. Lampsides, 75, 77, 78.

of Golacha (Colaşana); and in 1373 when 140 Christians were killed, some by Turkish sword, but most frozen in the snow.²⁸ In both cases the *tekmur* of Trabzon's warriors may have been routed by his own sister's husband.

Otherwise, all four 'sources' are agreed on one thing. Whoever they were, *han* Turali and Salcan *hatun*, Kutlu *beg* and *despoina* Maria, lived happily ever after.

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28. Panaretos, ed. *Lampsides*, 77.